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Let's amend this []*

December 18, 1956

Dear []

I wish to respond to and comment upon your [] of 3 December 1956 received here on 13 December last. The basic assumption of your communication is correct: that additional and meaningful measures will be instated to insure uniform implementation of agreed-upon policy. As I am sure you know, we are as anxious as you and others interested to guarantee that our facilities are usefully engaged in support of United States objectives, and that the margin for error in this regard is diminished to vanishing point.

Recent developments, both of positive nature with regard to what we have learned of the great impact and influence of the Fund's broadcasting, as well as negatively in respect to certain broadcasts in the Hungarian language which have drawn criticism, demand that policy lines be followed rigorously and assiduously. To achieve this end it is our firm determination; likewise it is our conviction that the indigenous tone and authentic character of our programs, which have been such important factors in building up audience rapport and extensive listenership among the satellite peoples, be maintained and enhanced. Therefore, the manner in which we seek to achieve desired policy ends is of itself of great importance. We intend to set up and put in motion new measures which would be practically workable in this regard. At the Fund President's behest, a detailed plan will be presented to him at early date.

Our thinking at the present time indicates that fundamental to implementation of policy on a firm basis is a clear, single chain of command from the Fund President to the broadcasting Director, to his chief operating personnel, with "policy" transmitted through that chain; a direct line of responsibility for content from the officer-in-charge of the desks (the American Program Director) to the desk chiefs; and holding desk chiefs wholly answerable in the first instance for the output of the various voices.

Policy control mechanisms now in force would be strengthened through more complete pre-broadcast review of political content, through fuller discussion by exile writers of commentary and other program outlines with the Political Advisor in Munich, in concert with designated Program Department staff. Several personnel changes or additions will be necessary in order to fulfill this objective.

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Current post-broadcast reviews would continue but with the understanding of all concerned that professional incompetence or wilful policy violation would be subject to disciplinary action involving suspension or dismissal of the offending individuals.

Successful working of this combination of pre-broadcast-content scrutiny and post-review presupposes two fundamental factors:

- (1) Clear understanding and agreement of what policy is on the part of American supervisors, and an equally clear communication of these policies on a continuing basis by the Policy Advisor to the exile staff, and
- (2) Competent and trustworthy exile staffs, working under desk chiefs with both authority to direct operations and responsibility for content.

Unless the practice which has been in effect over a number of years were to be changed drastically, one must ensure that genuine responsibility be given to exiles of the countries concerned, working on a full two-way partnership with American colleagues. We feel we are well advised in giving competent exile supervisors a maximum measure of our trust if we hope to secure from and through them the kind of ideas, resourcefulness and judgment which will make our programs worth listening to. Were we to impose a system of American pre-broadcast political script review, we could reach a point where the desk chiefs could not direct their own staffs when these exile subordinates know that orders given are subject to eventual over-call by another line of command. We feel it would be undesirable to have American-directed exile staffs, without seriously abridging mutual trust and working partnership; since it would be all but impossible to find responsible "American" Americans who at the same time are capable of thinking as Poles, Hungarians, Czechoslovakians, etc., there would be only one possible further step, the introduction of English master scripts put into other languages by translation staffs.

The foregoing treats with points 1 and 2 of your reference letter. With regard to point 3, steps already have been taken to reduce sharply the volume of political commentary and desk editorializing. We are presently, with reference to point 4, working out a system which should provide a daily teletype summary review of guidance on political subjects passed on to the exile desks by the Policy Advisor. Some manpower and technical problems remain to be worked out on the latter subject.

As you may know, pre-broadcast content review similar to that held in Munich before broadcasts has been instituted on a regular basis in New York within the Program Department.

Please be reassured that our objectives in this matter so important to all of us are identical with yours. We are hopeful that the improved controls desired can be put into operation without impinging damagingly on the exile-American partnership which has in large measure proved so beneficial.

Sincerely,

